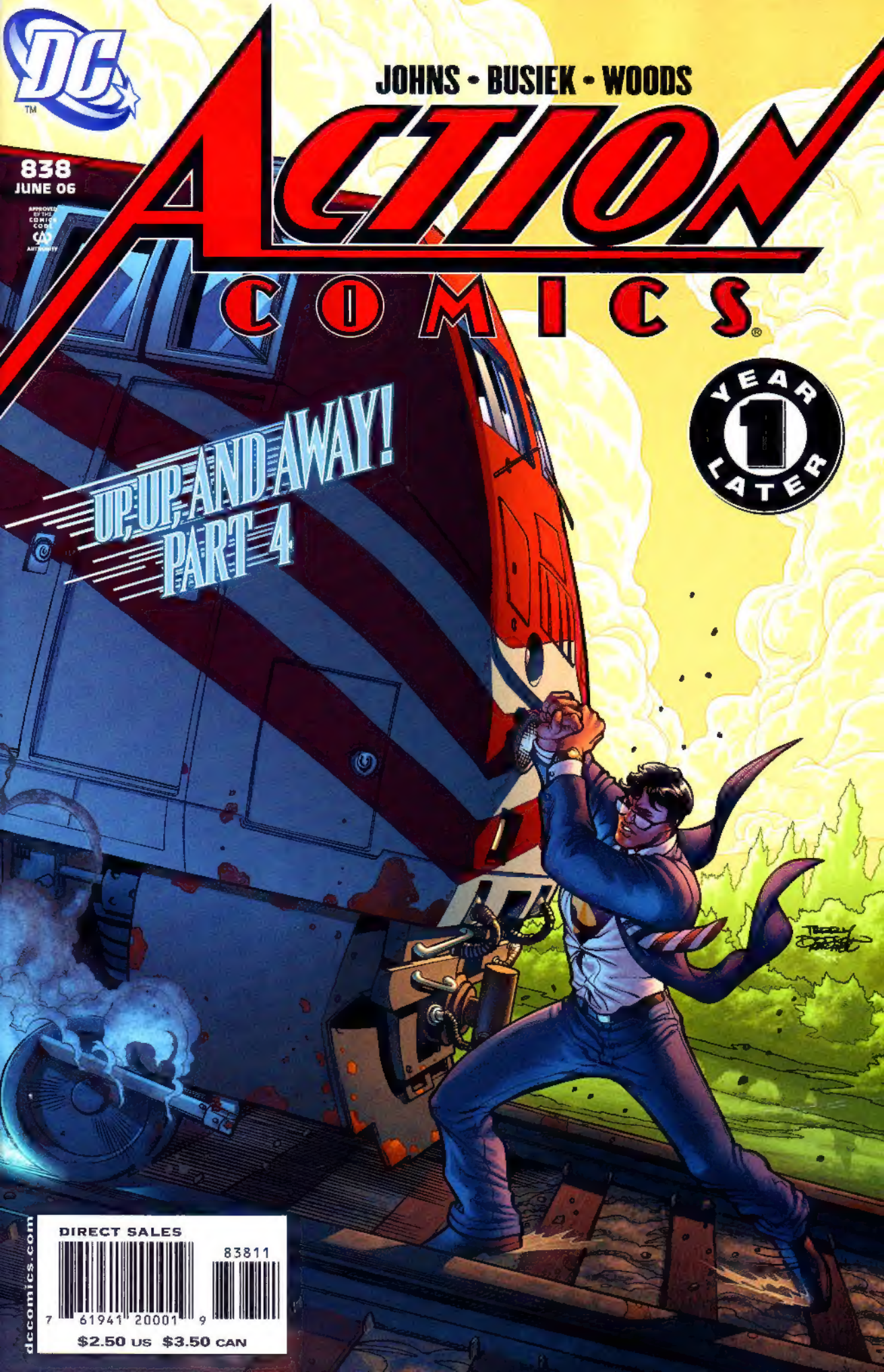
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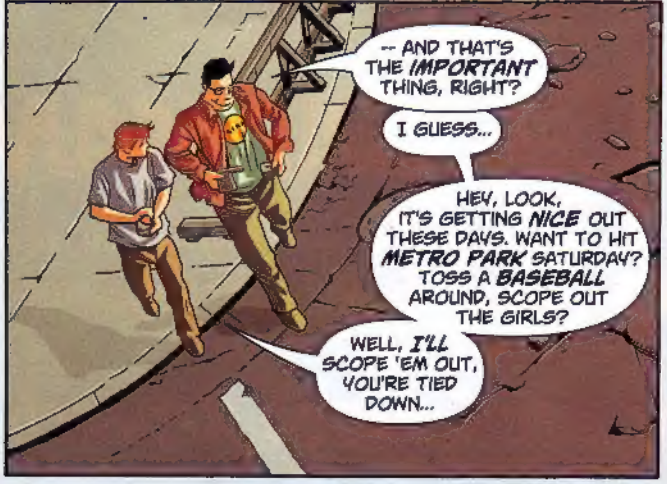
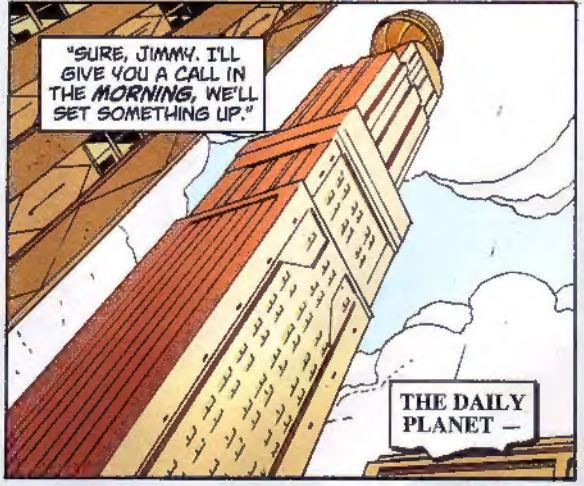
Everything's HOT. It's hot and I'm SCREAMING --
And then I'm in -- is it NEW YORK? --
I'M NOT SENSING ANYTHING.
ASIDE FROM THE USUAL SOLAR EFFECTS ON HUMAN SKIN -- TANNING, FRECKLING, CHOLECALCIFEROL PRODUCTION -- THERE'S NO SOLAR ENERGY THERE.
READOUTS SAY THE SAME THING. HIS KRYPTONIAN CELLULAR MAKE-UP HASN'T CHANGED --
-- BUT IT'S AS IF HIS CELLS ARE ACTIVELY RESISTING ABSORBING ANY SOLAR POWER. THAT'S WHY YOU'RE POWERLESS, SUPERMAN.
STILL, MAYBE WE CAN JUMPSTART IT, WITH ENOUGH OF A SOLAR SHOCK.
RAY? DR. LIGHT? READY AT THE INDUCTION UNITS?
GOOD TO GO.
FAIR PLAY
Yes, I'm at S.T.A.R. LABS in New York, and Mr. Terrific's called in some OUTSIDE HELP. And then everything's WHITE -- harsh and BLINDING --

SULLIVAN PLACE, METROPOLIS —
I wake up early. I was dreaming, remembering. I'm not sure why it was about that time at S.T.A.R., though.
Lois murmurs and shifts in her sleep, and for a moment, I feel like something's wrong. Like something's slipping away.
LOIS...
In the end, I let her sleep. But something's still nagging at me.
It's not home. We've never been happier than we've been this past year. It's not Ma and Pa, or her sister Lucy and Ron.
It's not work. I had responsibilities as Superman, and I met them. Now I have responsibilities as Clark, and meet them, too.
And I'll tell you...

Rocketed to Earth from the doomed planet Krypton, the baby Kal-El was found and raised by Jonathan and Martha Kent in Smallville, Kansas. Once the world-famous hero Superman, now powerless in the wake of an earth-shaking crisis, he fights for Truth, Justice & The American Way as...
CLARK KENT
...I'm having a great time doing it!
NOW, JIMMY!
TAKE THE PICTURE NOW!
DAILY PLANET
FWSSH
Intergang -- the international organized crime society -- has sparked violence and murder throughout the world this last year, in Khandaq, Paris, even Chicago. For the last several months, they've been infiltrating Metropolis, too, while we've been rebuilding.
There've been rumors that Intergang front companies were getting no-bid reconstruction contracts that should have been competitive, and now --
HUH?
HEY!
-- I've finally got proof.
WE'VE GOT COMPANY!

I WOULDN'T, GENTLEMEN. YOU'D ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE.
WE'VE GOT A BROADBAND CONNECTION TO THE DAILY PLANET. THAT PHOTO'S ALREADY BEEN TRANSMITTED. SO TELL ME, COUNCILMAN JEFFRIES --
HE -- HE CAN'T --
-- IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO SAY TO YOUR CONSTITUENTS ABOUT TAKING GRAFT FROM INTERGANG AFTER RUNNING ON A LAW-AND-ORDER PLATFORM?
Ah -- Ah --
We'd alerted the police, too, and they were right behind us --
MAN, CLARK!
PERRY'S RIGHT -- YOU DON'T BACK OFF FROM ANYTHING ANYMORE, DO YOU? AND THE NEW DIRECT LINK TO THE PLANET'S GREAT, huh?
57
TROPOLIS PD
IN THEORY, JIM.
I JUST WISH I COULD GET A BETTER CONNECTION --
-- MINE'S BEEN CUTTING IN AND OUT ALL MORNING...
Y-YOU DIDN'T HAVE A CONNECTION -- ?
THEY DIDN'T KNOW THAT, THOUGH. AND YOUR CAMERA HAD ONE --


-- AND THAT'S THE IMPORTANT THING, RIGHT?
I GUESS...
HEY, LOOK. IT'S GETTING NICE OUT THESE DAYS. WANT TO HIT METRO PARK SATURDAY? TOSS A BASEBALL AROUND, SCOPE OUT THE GIRLS?
WELL, I'LL SCOPE 'EM OUT, YOU'RE TIED DOWN...


"SURE, JIMMY. I'LL GIVE YOU A CALL IN THE MORNING, WE'LL SET SOMETHING UP."
THE DAILY PLANET —

I'm going over wire reports. There's been a rash of Kryptonite thefts lately -- from research hospitals, university labs, armories...
I'm looking for a connection, to see if they're somehow related to that bizarre "Flea Circus" breaking the Kryptonite Man out of Stryker's the other day.
Just the thought of Kryptonite robberies is bad news, but -- could it be Intergang? The Flea Circus were some sort of insectoid creatures -- they could have been extraterrestrial.
DAILY PLANET
Intergang
K-man
But if it's Intergang, why do they want that much Kryptonite with Superman gone? And is it them?

Or could it be someone else?

HEY, SMALLVILLE --

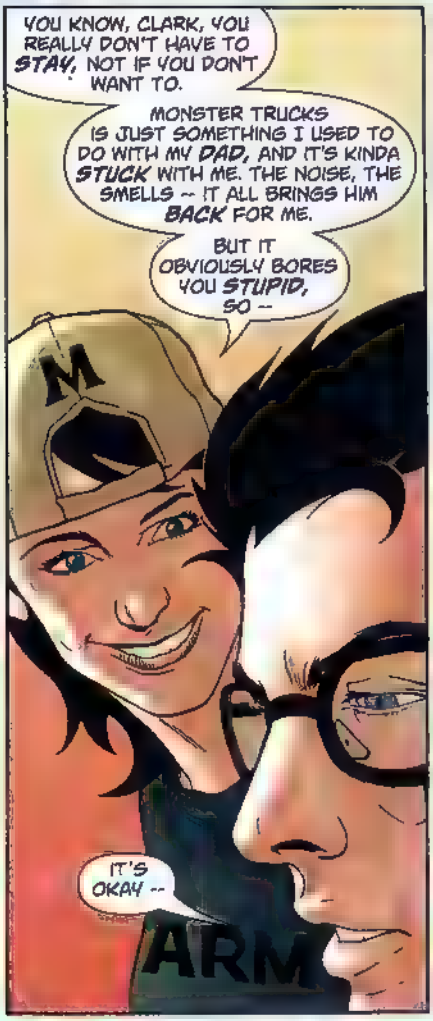
-- AREN'T YOU COLD?
HI, LOIS.
SHOULD I BE?
SHOULD YOU BE? IT'S FREEZING IN HERE! AIR CONDITIONING'S STUCK ON OVERDRIVE, AND MAINTENANCE HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIX IT YET.
BOY, YOU MUST BE REALLY INTO THAT STORY.
WHAT ARE YOU WORKING --
-- uh-oh.
WHAT?
AAGHH! THE SCREEN FROZE! I HAD THREE PIECES GOING AT ONCE -- INCLUDING THAT CITY HALL STORY PERRY NEEDS TODAY! IT'S ALL --
SOMEBODY MENTION THE CITY HALL PIECE?
THERE A PROBLEM?
JUST A -- SLIGHT DELAY, PERRY. COMPUTER CRASH.
BUT I'VE GOT GOOD NOTES, AND I CAN RECONSTRUCT FROM THE AUTO-SAVE IN --
CLARK, CLARK, CLARK.
IT'S A MODERN WORLD. YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF YOUR EQUIPMENT, KEEP IT RUNNING SMOOTHLY.
BUT Y'KNOW, I CAN'T BE TOO MAD...

...NOT WHEN YOU DELIVER HEADLINES LIKE THIS!
DAILY PLANET
COUNCILMAN TURNS STATE'S EVIDENCE
Agrees to Testify Against Intergang
KEEP BRINGING IN STUFF THIS GOOD, KENT...
...YOU CAN BREAK ALL THE COMPUTERS YOU WANT. NICE PHOTO FROM OLSEN, TOO.
Hap-py days are here again...
CLAPCLAP CLAPCLAPCLAP CLAPCLAPCLAP
H-huh?
WELL, GO CLARK!
GREAT WORK, KENT! MAKIN' THE REST OF US LOOK LIKE SLACKERS!
I'LL SAY! I HAVEN'T SEEN PERRY THIS HAPPY IN --
-- WELL, I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG!
CLAP CLAP CLAP
THANKS, GUYS.
GOTTA GET BACK TO WORK...
YOU'RE FOCUSED, CLARK -- EVEN FOR YOU. IS IT THE INTERGANG THING?
MAYBE. BUT IT'S LUTHOR, TOO. HE'S JUST UP AND VANISHED SINCE THAT DAY IN THE ALLEY, AND I'M WONDERING...

"...WHAT'S HE UP TO?"
ahuh --
huhh --
K-CANNON WORKING OPTIMALLY AT 35% OUTPUT.
ALL SYSTEMS FUNCTIONING SOLIDLY WITHIN IDEAL PERFORMANCE MARGINS.
COOOOL.

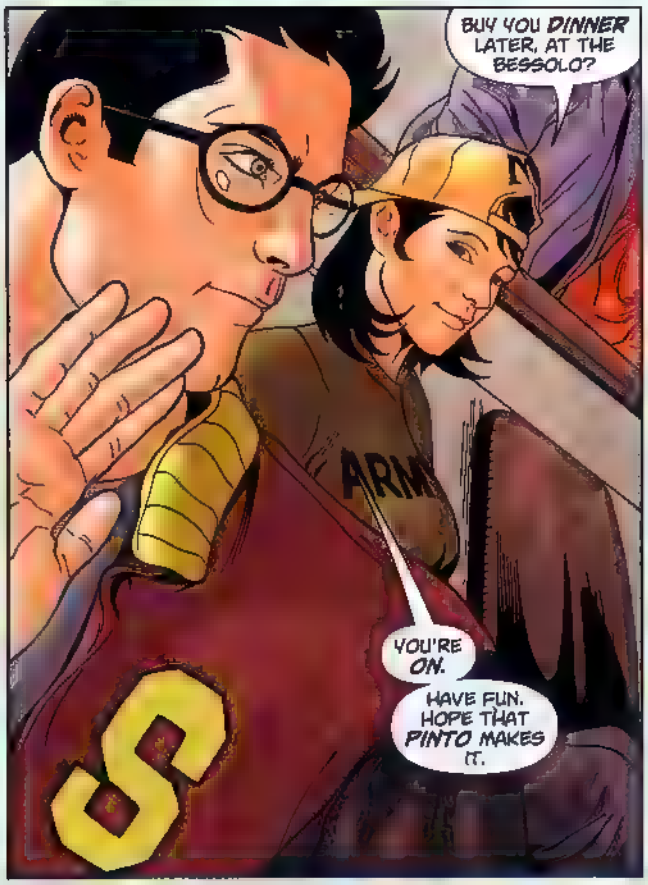
YOU KNOW, DR. ABERNATHY -- OR MAY I CALL YOU RUSSELL? -- YOU WERE REALLY ON TO SOMETHING WITH YOUR ISOTOPAL KRYPTONITE ENHANCER.
YOU'D MANAGED TO MAKE, OH, TWO-THIRDS OF AN ACTUAL DISCOVERY. A PITY YOU COULDN'T DO MORE WITH IT THAN TURN YOURSELF INTO A RADIOACTIVE FREAK.
LUCKILY, I WAS ABLE TO CORRECT THE DEFICIENCIES IN YOUR THINKING -- AND IN YOUR HARDWARE.
D-DAMN YOU, LUTHOR...LET ME DOWN FROM HERE...
REALLY, RUSSELL.
WHERE'S YOUR SPIRIT OF DISCOVERY? YOU SHOULD BE PROUD TO BE PART OF UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF YOUR K-ENERGY BROADCAST. OR, ACTUALLY, NARROWCAST.
CAN I PUSH THE BUTTON, BOSS? Huh? Huh?
WH-WHAT ARE YOU D--?
IT'S QUITE SIMPLE, AT LEAST IN CONCEPT.
WE'VE AMASSED VIRTUALLY ALL THE KNOWN KRYPTONITE ON EARTH. ITS POWER IS CHANNELED INTO AND THROUGH YOU -- WHERE YOUR POWERS INTENSIFY IT TENFOLD --
-- AND FROM THERE BEAMED DOWN THROUGH THE SUNSTONE CONTROL UNIT --
NOW, BOSS?
-- AND -- NOW, TOYMAN --
-- DOWN TO THE TARGET ITSELF.
AAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAA
THE SHUSTER SPORTS ARENA --
Basketball season's over, and the Generals didn't make the finals, as usual. But the Arena stays busy, with the Haley Bros. Circus, concerts, and of course --

KRKKKH
BSSH
KSSH
WOO-HOO!
YEAH!
BIG BLUE!
GO! GO!
ARMY


YOU KNOW, CLARK, YOU REALLY DON'T HAVE TO STAY, NOT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO.
MONSTER TRUCKS IS JUST SOMETHING I USED TO DO WITH MY DAD, AND IT'S KINDA STUCK WITH ME. THE NOISE, THE SMELLS -- IT ALL BRINGS HIM BACK FOR ME.
BUT IT OBVIOUSLY BORES YOU STUPID, SO --
IT'S OKAY --
ARM

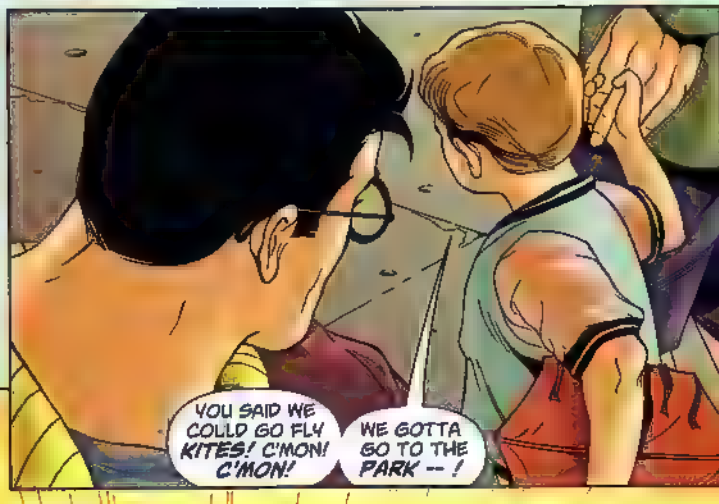
-- I'VE GOT A BOOK, AND I DON'T MIND THE NOISE.
KIND OF FASCINATING, TO HEAR THAT MANY NEW WAYS FOR SOMEONE TO SHOUT "HEY, COOL, BROKEN CAR!", TOO.

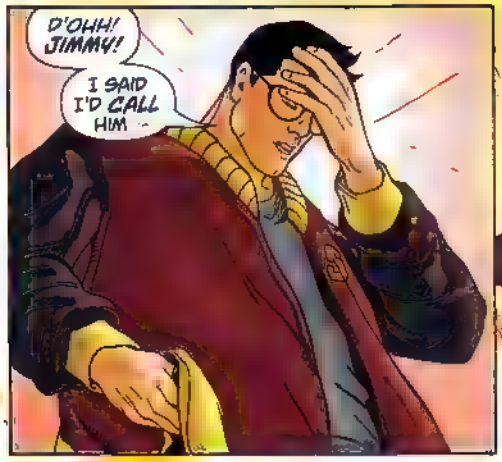
YOU'VE SNEAKED A LOOK AT YOUR WATCH THREE TIMES IN THE LAST TEN MINUTES. GO, GO.
IT'S NICE OF YOU TO COME ALONG, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO PUT YOURSELF THROUGH IT.


BUY YOU DINNER LATER, AT THE BESSOLO?
YOU'RE ON.
HAVE FUN. HOPE THAT PINTO MAKES IT.

I go --
-- but I m still feeling uneasy Like I'm abandoning her, leaving her behind But that's absurd It's just monster trucks

Maybe I'll stop by Metro Video, see if the new box sets are out. So many shows I used to miss
COME ON, DADDY!


YOU SAID WE COULD GO FLY KITES! C'MON! C'MON!
WE GOTTA GO TO THE PARK -- !


D'OHH! JIMMY!
I SAID I'D CALL HIM

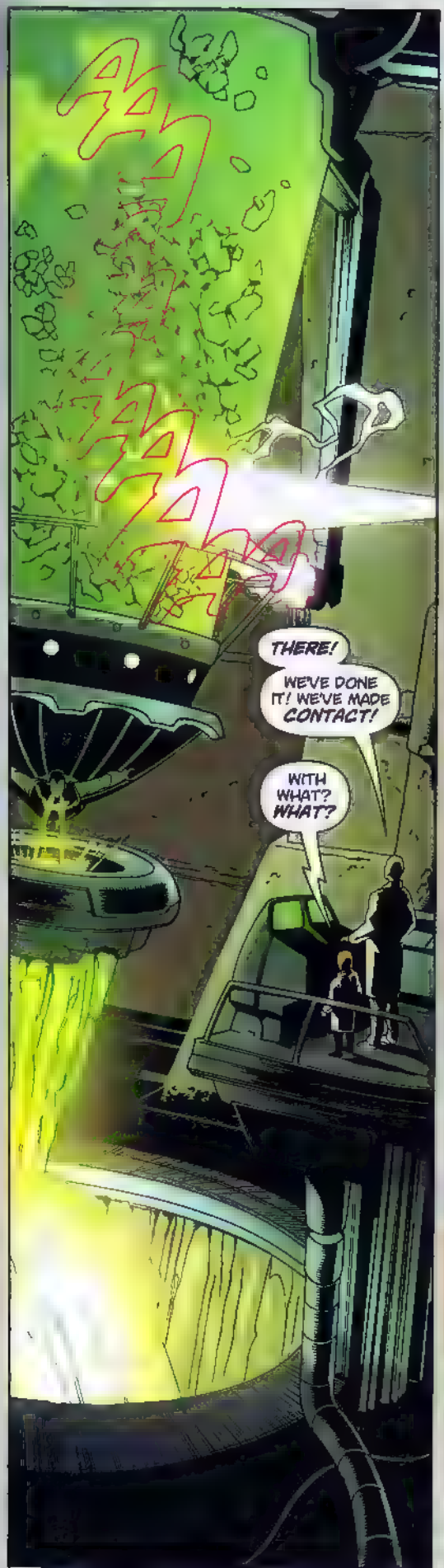
But even as I pull out my cell
H-huh?

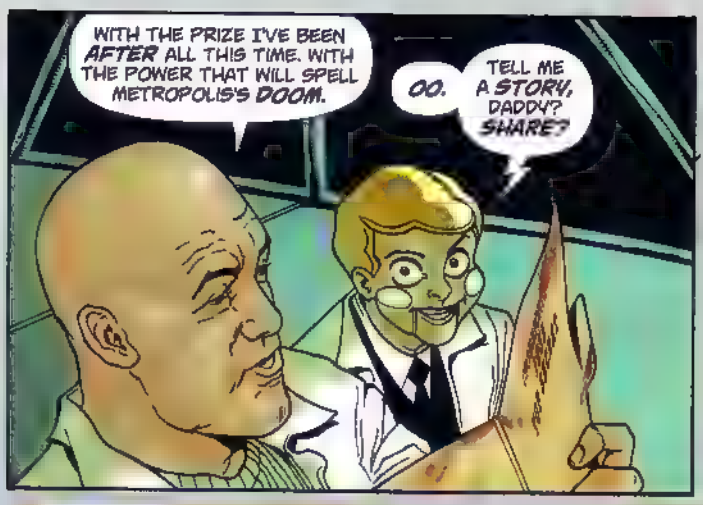
This...isn t good
HEY-HO FROM INTERGANG, KENT.
THE COUNCILMAN'S NEXT!

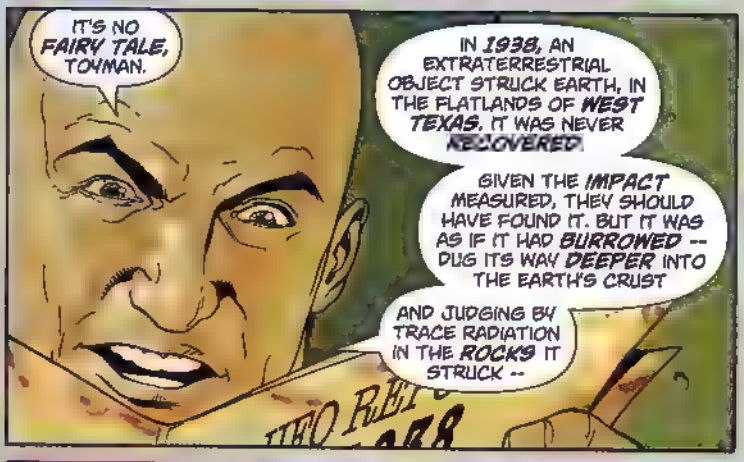
C'MON, CLARK...
SIGH
I GOTTA GET A DOG.

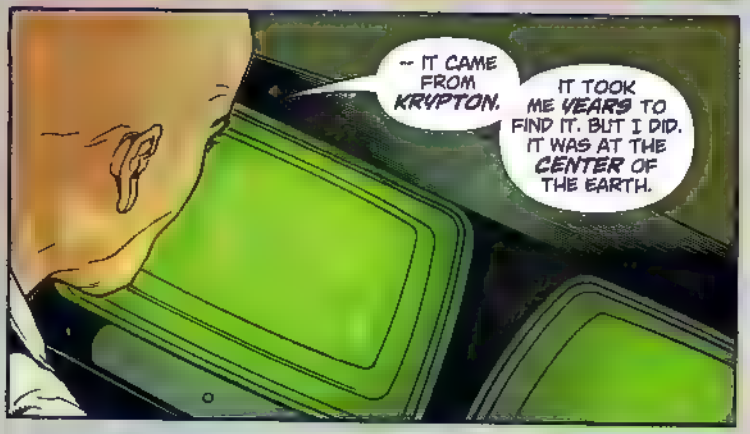
Okay. Should have expected this I've pissed off Intergang...
...and they've decided to take a flyswatter to me. Or maybe it's a sledgehammer
Neutron. Former security guard, caught in a nuclear accident, transformed into living energy. His suit's the only thing that keeps him from exploding and taking half the city with him.
THEY WANT YOU TO HURT, KENT. THEY WANT ONE LAYER OF SKIN BURNED OFF AT A TIME.
THEY WANT YOU TO DIE SLOW. SCREAMING.
And Radion. Two-bit thug with an energy suit -- until he got dunked in a nuclear reactor, and bulked up to this.
AN' I GET TO GROW TUMORS IN YOUR LUNGS.
MAYBE YOUR FACE!
I wanted to get clear of crowds, find some shelter, but this'll have to do.
Time to call in Supergi --
KLK
What? The signal watch? It's not working?
KLK KLK KLK

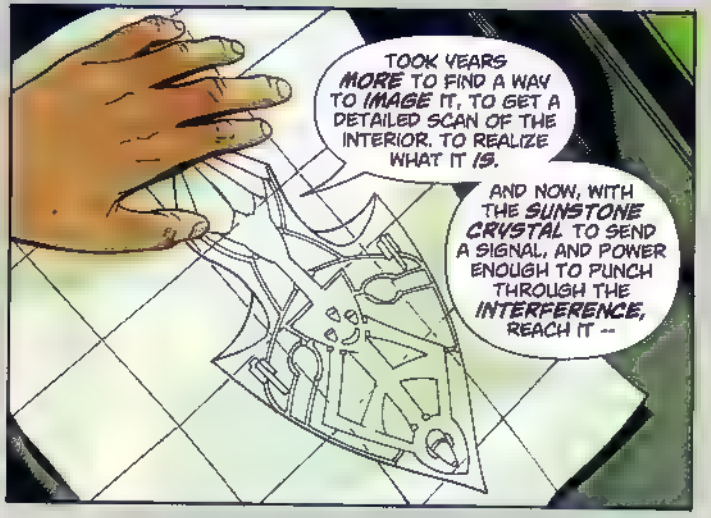
CHECKIN' THE TIME, KENT?
TIME'S UP!
I need to keep them away from the Square. From anywhere there are people.
SKRAKSH!!
Got to get to cover -- get to some kind of shelter --
HAW! NEVER SEEN ANYBODY HUSTLE THAT FAST! HELL WITH THIS, I'M GONNA KNOCK A BUILDING ONTO --
ONE LAYER AT A TIME, RADION. DON'T FORGET THAT.
Cell phone's on the fritz, too.
And I can't help wondering if Intergang freed the Kryptonite Man, wouldn't they use him on this, with two other radiation based criminals?
I should put it out of my mind and just run, but still -- still --


AAH
AAH
AAH
THERE!
WE'VE DONE IT! WE'VE MADE CONTACT!
WITH WHAT? WHAT?


WITH THE PRIZE I'VE BEEN AFTER ALL THIS TIME. WITH THE POWER THAT WILL SPELL METROPOLIS'S DOOM.
OO.
TELL ME A STORY, DADDY? SHARE?


IT'S NO FAIRY TALE, TOYMAN.
IN 1938, AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL OBJECT STRUCK EARTH, IN THE FLATLANDS OF WEST TEXAS. IT WAS NEVER RECOVERED.
GIVEN THE IMPACT MEASURED, THEY SHOULD HAVE FOUND IT. BUT IT WAS AS IF IT HAD BURROWED -- DUG ITS WAY DEEPER INTO THE EARTH'S CRUST
AND JUDGING BY TRACE RADIATION IN THE ROCKS IT STRUCK --


-- IT CAME FROM KRYPTON.
IT TOOK ME YEARS TO FIND IT. BUT I DID. IT WAS AT THE CENTER OF THE EARTH.


TOOK YEARS MORE TO FIND A WAY TO IMAGE IT, TO GET A DETAILED SCAN OF THE INTERIOR. TO REALIZE WHAT IT IS.
AND NOW, WITH THE SUNSTONE CRYSTAL TO SEND A SIGNAL, AND POWER ENOUGH TO PUNCH THROUGH THE INTERFERENCE, REACH IT --

--WE'VE WOKEN IT UP.
IS IT... MOVING?
YES. MOVING UPWARD. COMING TO US...
ZKAWW
KENT
Neutron's blasts -- coming closer -- don't know how much longer I can --
AAAH!
For a minute I think he s hit me --
Otherwise, he'd have blown my arm off
FINALLY. LET'S GET TO WORK.
But they're overconfident. They give me a chance, and --
KEN
OH, NO

I wanted to reach the light-rail station, get into the tunnels, but I thought it'd be deserted. The train should have just gone
But there must've been delays -
And now there's no place to go --
RUN! RUN! GET CLEAR! SOMEONE CALL THE S.C.U.-- THE JSA--!
HNH.
WHO DOES KENT THINK HE IS, SOME KINDA HERO?
If I can make the tunnels --
There are cul-de-sacs, access hatches to the subways -- I can --
KENT
UH-UNH, KENT! NO HIDEYS!
UFF!
And then it gets worse.

THE TRAIN --!
Can't breathe -- knocked the wind out of me, landing like that --
And I can't -- can't get up --
AW, YEAH. THIS IS GONNA BE GOOD!
NOT BAD. NOT BAD AT ALL...
SKREEEEEEEEEEEE
And I can see the motorman's face -- see his mouth shouting words, shouting something I can't hear --
And all I can think -
-- is how the trains are always, *always* late whenever you really need them to be on time --!

SKREEEEEEEEEEE

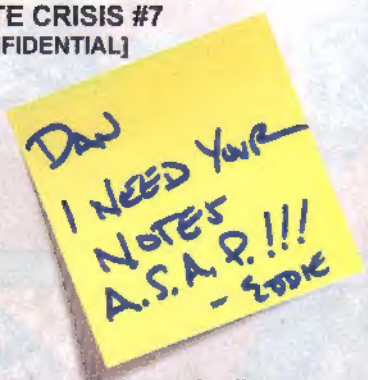
KENT

VROOOO

UP, UP AND AWAY! CHAPTER FOUR
POWERS AND ABILITIES

GEOFF JOHNS & KURT BUSIEK-Writers • RENATO GUEDES-Artist
BRAD ANDERSON-Colors • ROB LEIGH-Letters
TERRY & RACHEL DODSON-Cover Artists • ALEX SINCLAIR-Cover Colorist
NACHIE CASTRO-Associate Editor • MATT IDELSON-Editor
SUPERMAN created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

INFINITE CRISIS #7
[CONFIDENTIAL]



Script by: Geoff Johns
Art by: Phil Jimenez and George Pérez

So here we are. It's only the sixth week of DC Nation and I'm already running into scheduling problems. I've got some high-pressure deadlines to get this column done and give notes to Geoff Johns on the final issue of INFINITE CRISIS.

Since I consider these tasks of equal importance, I've decided to combine the two and use this column to send Geoff my notes.

Great idea? I think so.

But remember, don't mention this to anyone. I don't want to spoil the surprises in store for the regular fans when they pick up this monumental issue next week. Now, to the prolific Mr. Johns:

Geoff:

Overall, a great, great climax to the series with all the excitement, action, drama and tragedy we discussed. Still, I have some concerns as listed below:

Page 2 and 3- Double-page spread. I like heroes vs. villains, but just because you have a DC Encyclopedia, that doesn't mean you have to use every character on these two pages.

Page 4- Ouch! Bane's back and he's breaking backs again. Will make sure Batman Editor Pete Tamasi is aware of this.

Page 5- It's only page 5 and we already have an extremely high body count; don't forget you need to leave someone to kill for the end of the story, too.

Page 10- Ooooh, so that's who The Flash is. Will check to see if Editor Joan Hilty has the same one in the new FLASH series.

Page 11- Great, now you have a splash page with every single flying hero in the DCU; Phil is going to think you hate him.

Page 14- The Thin Green Line. I LOVE IT! You're right; this is perfect for George to draw.

Pages 16 and 17- More casualties? Works for me.

Page 18- Dude, we did not go to all that trouble bringing Hal back just to kill him again. Please change it.

Page 28- Wow. Big moment. Not sure I can approve this happening. Have to take it up to Paul Levitz and hope he's in a good mood.

Page 30- I was wondering when you were going to bring him back, but hell, that scene is a little too brutal, even for me.

Pages 32 and 33- Nice wrap to the story and a great setup for the first issue of 52.

Pages 34 and 35- Another double-page spread of the entire DCU? Phil again? I don't want to make that call (I'll have Berganza do it).

Page 36- You dog. Should have known you would end on him. Approved.

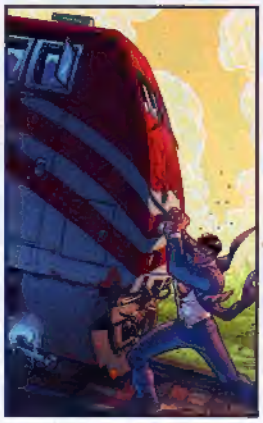
By the way, I agree completely: we can't cut the page count. I'll make sure we keep this issue at 36 pages without raising the price. The fans have been great to us, and it's a nice way to thank them for joining this wild ride.

dan didio

DC NATION

For a complete list of this week's titles, sneak peeks, breaking news and more, visit us at dccomics.com

THE HOT LIST THIS WEEK



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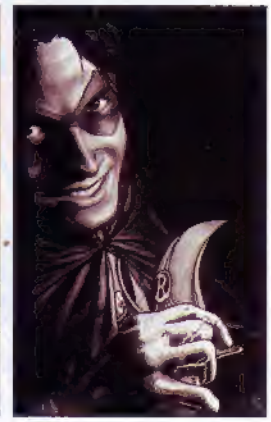

BATMAN #652

ION #1 (OF 12)

Next in...

SUPERMAN #652

Yikes! His powers may be back, but so are a veritable plethora of villains who want to take Supes out!

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